

868 and to be alert. The boys are encouraged to develop into great warriors and robbers. If the boy's father or one of his brothers was killed by an enemy, the boy is constantly admonished of his sacred duty of blood-vengeance.⁹⁰

[579] Yes, boys are taught to become great robbers and raiders. Robbery and [577] raiding are looked upon by the North Caucasians not only as a licit occupation (as long as the victim is a stranger), but a very honourable one. Robbery is a virtue, a national virtue, and forms one of the most important subjects of the curriculum of the Caucasian school-boy.⁹¹ Robbers of Ossetia even have a patron-saint, St. George himself (*Sau-baredzi Dznar*, i. e., "The Saint of the Black Horseman"), whose favour must be implored, for success or failure in a raid depends entirely on him. Crime is glorified.⁹² Baddeley gives us an example of how a victim once forgave a thief out of mere admiration for the skill with which the theft was committed.⁹³ To rob without being caught is the greatest glory of the Cherkess.⁹⁴ Among the Abadzekhs the best robber is always chosen as leader.⁹⁵ It was only in recent times that the People's Court in the district of Adighé began to condemn natives for a crime which till then had been considered a virtue—to steal from another village.⁹⁶ The Chechen children are actually drilled in stealing. When a Chechen boy is allowed to bear arms for the first time, his father pronounces the solemn words, "May they serve you on the right and wrong paths, in theft and war."⁹⁷ The ambition of the young Georgian mountaineer is none other than to become a famous robber.⁹⁸ In short, everywhere in the mountains, the boy must be taught and trained to become great, and greatness consists in raids, robbery, theft, and vengeance.⁹⁹ Of course, there is a great difference between the Caucasian robbers of today and those of half a century ago. The Cherkess, for example, are no longer so notorious as they were several decades ago. Today they are generally peaceful agriculturalists and cattle breeders.¹⁰⁰

Girls are brought up by the mother, from whom they learn to cook, make clothes, embroider, work out in the field, etc.¹⁰¹

⁹⁰ Klaproth, *Beschreibung der russischen Provinzen zwischen dem Kaspischen und Schwarzen Meer*, p. 120. What Klaproth says of the Lezgians held good for all mountaineers.

⁹¹ Potocki, *op. cit.*, p. 153: "... dans tout le Caucase le brigandage était en honneur." See also: Ellis, *Memoir of a Map, etc.*, p. 20; Essad-Bey, *op. cit.*, p. 194; Dubrovín, *Istorijsa*, I, i, p. 443, ii, p. 364.

⁹² Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 24.

⁹³ Baddeley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 114.

⁹⁴ Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage autour du Caucase*, I, p. 131.

⁹⁵ Pallas, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise in d. süd. Statth. d. russ. Reiche, etc.*, I, p. 369.

⁹⁶ Ladyženskij, FT, p. 194.

⁹⁷ Essad-Bey, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁹⁸ Essad-Bey, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

⁹⁹ This reminds us of what Caesar had to say of the Germans, *De Bello Gallico*, vi, 23: "They do not regard it as infamous to rob others, provided that the robbery is committed outside their own land, but they actually encourage their youth to such acts, both to give them practice and to keep them busy."

¹⁰⁰ Ladyženskij, FT, p. 200.

¹⁰¹ Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 24.